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## Ballast Quarterly Review, v16n1, Autumn 2000

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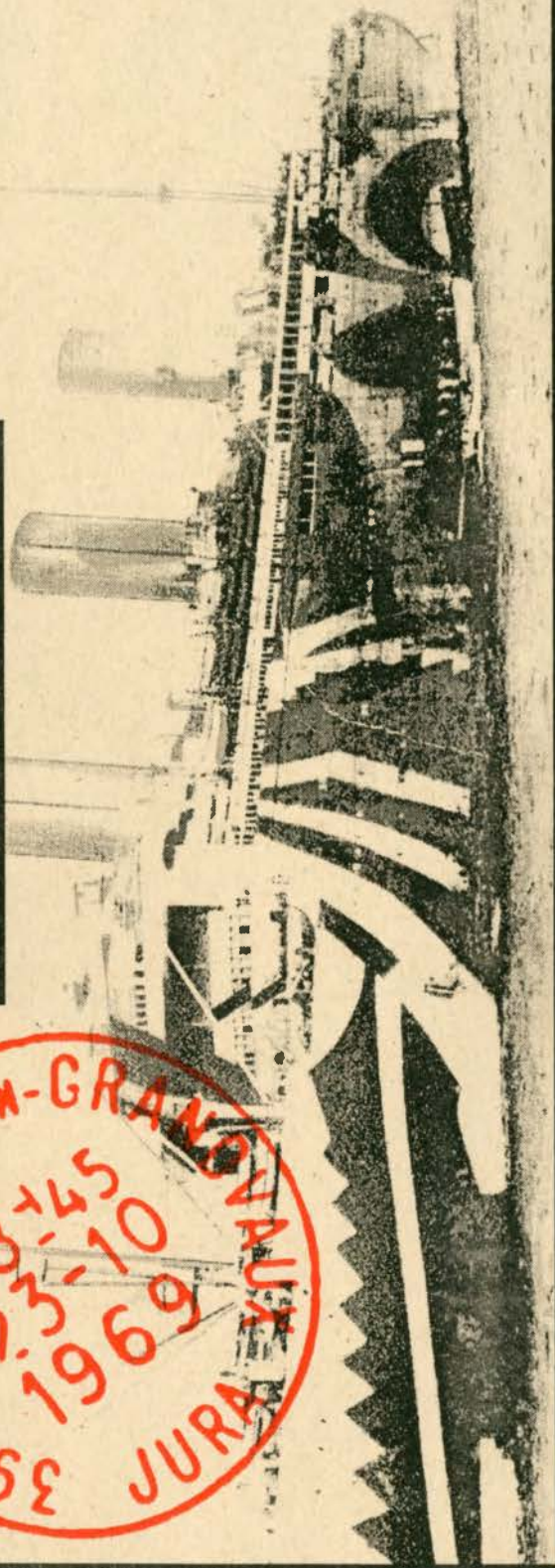
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our sixteenth year



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The Yale  
Puppeteers,  
who per-  
formed around  
the country in  
the 1940s, had  
a puppet Mae  
West, who  
said: "You  
don't have to  
come up and  
see me any  
more; I'm liv-  
ing on the  
ground floor  
now."

JOSEPH T.  
SHIPLEY  
quoted in Eric  
Partridge and Paul  
Beale, eds., *A  
Dictionary of Catch  
Phrases* (New York:  
Dorset Press,  
1988), p. 54.

*Ballast* is an acronym for Books Art Language  
Logic Ambiguity Science and Teaching, as well  
as a distant allusion to *Blast*, the short-lived  
publication founded during World War I by  
Wyndham Lewis, the Vorticist artist and  
writer. *Ballast* is mainly a pastiche of astonish-  
ing passages from books, magazines, diaries  
and other writings. Put differently, it is a jour-  
nal devoted to wit, the contents of which are  
intended to be insightful, amusing or thought  
provoking.

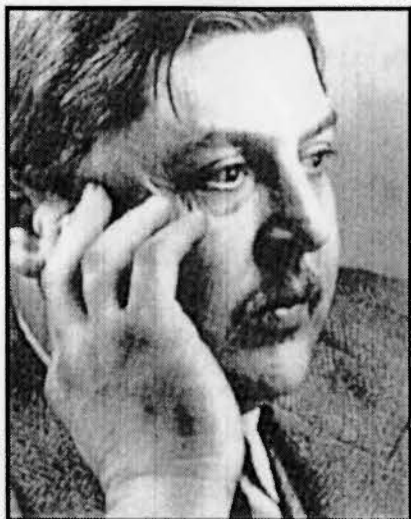
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The physicist George Gamow was also an entertain-  
ing popularizer. He once told the story of how with  
his wife and their baby daughter he visited the  
Leaning Tower of Pisa. As they climbed the steps,  
they noticed an increasingly musty smell, which  
they first attributed to the ancient walls of the  
building. Then, however, they began to suspect  
their little girl, and by the time they reached the  
top it was clear that she needed immediate atten-  
tion. "And from the very place," explained Gamow,  
raising his arm and his voice dramatically, "where  
Galileo launched his experimental objects we also  
propelled..."

RUDOLF ARHEIM in a letter to *Ballast* (1993).



**ABOVE** Photograph of American painter **PHILIP EVERGOOD** (1901-1973) by Peter A. and Paul Juley, from Joan Stahl, ed., *American Artists in Photographic Portraits* (Mineola NY: Dover Publications, 1995), from the Dover Pictorial Archives.

I learned from her and others like her that a first-rate soup is more creative than a second-rate painting, and that, generally, cooking or parenthood or making a home could be creative while poetry need not be; it could be uncreative.

**ABRAHAM MASLOW** *Toward A Psychology of Being* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1968).

**JOSEPH PODLESNIK** One of my older brother's friends [Bruce Brinker] is an inveterate punster. Once, when he and the guys went into a Pizza Hut, the clerk asked him, "Do you want a box for your pizza?" Bruce replied, "No, but I'll go a few rounds for a pitcher of beer."

Richard Stern arrived and told us some juicy anecdotes about two Rumanian "princesses" ninety years old whom he had met in Venice. One of them, drinking her coffee, brought the cup too close to her face—and, Stern went on, the nose, probably restored with a wax cast, began to melt and finally fell into the coffee.

**MIRCEA ELIADE**  
*Journal II 1957-1967* (University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 270.

**ALAN BENNETT** We started off trying to set up a small anarchist community, but people wouldn't obey the rules.

ABOVE  
 Photograph of  
 ROCKWELL  
 KENT by Peter  
 A. and Paul Juley,  
 from Joan Stahl, ed.,  
*American Artists in  
 Photographic Portraits*  
 (Mineola NY: Dover  
 Publications, 1995),  
 from the Dover  
 Pictorial Archives.



**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** Constance Martin, *Distant Shores: The Odyssey of Rockwell Kent* (Chesterfield MA: Chameleon Books, and Berkeley CA: University of California Press, in association with the Norman Rockwell Museum, 2000). ISBN 0-520-22712-3. This is the catalog for an exhibition of 80 paintings, prints and drawings by Rockwell Kent (1882-1971), the American artist and writer whose stark, dramatic drawings for the 1930 edition of *Moby Dick* brought him fame as a book illustrator. Kent was a student of William Merrit Chase, Robert Henri and Abbott H. Thayer (who was a naturalist as well as a painter), and a friend and classmate of George Bellows and Edward Hopper. This is not a study of Kent's illustrations, but of unsung, less important views of natural settings that came from his extended visits to remote wilderness areas in Maine, Alaska, Newfoundland, Greenland, and Tierra del Fuego. Despite his popularity, Kent's reputation plummeted in 1953 when he was ordered by Senator Joseph McCarthy to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, where he was accused of leftist leanings. While he denied being a Communist, in response to the subsequent seizure of his passport, he gave a large collection of his paintings, illustrations and manuscripts to "the people of the Soviet Union." It is surprising yet partly appropriate that this traveling exhibition should originate at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Mass., because, however separate their styles and the politics of their followers, these two artists named Rockwell admired each other's work and were often mistaken for one another by the public.

**SPIKE  
 MILLIGAN**  
 He walked with a pronounced  
 limp, L-I-M-P,  
 pronounced "limp."





**LEFT**  
Lithograph by  
**ROCKWELL**  
**KENT** titled  
"Nightmare" from  
Carl Zigrosser, ed.,  
*Medicine and the*  
*Artist* (Mineola NY:  
Dover Publications,  
1970), from the  
Dover Pictorial  
Archives.

As soon as I got up to give my lecture [at New Mexico State University in 1975], I was seized with violent diarrhea pains—a nightmare situation come true! It seemed to me that I kept on saying confused sentences, though luckily some of the lecture hung together. No one seemed to have noticed. I even pulled myself together sufficiently to do well in answering questions after the talk. Then of course everything delayed my getting to a lavatory. People asking for autographs, the ones too shy to get up in front of the audience asking their little private questions. There was some difficulty in finding a lavatory. Then when the chairman did take me to one, NOT IN USE was written across MEN on the door. We found another and as soon as I got into it an elderly gentleman emerged from one of its stalls and said, "Didn't I meet you twenty years ago? Now where was it? What did you speak about, etc." I said, "Excuse me, I'll speak to you afterwards, outside" and dashed into the place he had left.

**STEPHEN SPENDER** in John Goldsmith, ed., *Stephen Spender: Journals 1939-1983* (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 310-311.

**PETER**  
**USTINOV**

Courage is often lack of insight,  
where as cowardice in many cases  
is based on good information.

## ALASTAIR REID

He [British poet Robert Graves] said often that he bred show dogs in order to be able to afford a cat. The dogs were prose; the cat was poetry.

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** Michael S. Sanders, *The Yard: Building a Destroyer at the Bath Iron Works* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1999). ISBN 0-06-019246-1. *The Yard* may suggest a book about life in a prison compound, but it isn't. It is an unexpectedly gripping non-fictional, detailed, authentic, literary account of the building, launching, and commissioning of a U. S. Destroyer christened *Donald Cook* on December 4, 1998, a scant year before this book was published. If there was any haste in the writing and research, it is not evident. If anything is evident, it is the care of the detailed research (over two years) of the major processes that are ultimately brought together to create such an astounding vessel. This book is, also, a history of the Bath Iron Works and its place in the life of the town, Bath, on the banks of the Kennebec River in Maine.

Sanders uses a novelist's devices to keep the reader rolling along: No quotation marks around statements, relying instead on the context, though he doesn't avoid using terms such as "he explained," and "she said"; biographies of many people in *The Yard*, and some in the town of Bath, including my nephew, Tom Hoerth and his family, who live in the shadow of those enormous cranes that tower over the local landscape, symbolizing *The Yard's* domination of the local culture.

Among readers, the engineer minds will delight in the mechanical details in the design, fabrication, and architecture of such a vessel. The political wonks among us will follow closely the ways in which *The Yard's* life is dependent on the Federal Government and the military services. Art-minded and aesthetics-minded will appreciate the uncounted scenes depicted by this gifted writer, Sanders, as he helps us to imagine being there at the tantalizingly exciting moment of launch.

Chapter 11, "Commissioning," is a straightforward journalistic report of the crowd, the dignitaries, the ranking military officers, the widow and family of the war hero, Donald Cook, and the location. Also, we are introduced to the new crew and the new Captain of the *Donald Cook*, as she starts her career on the high seas, in the service of the country. It is, I say, straightforward reportage, but the affect is a highly charged, emotional, collective cheer for the U.S. Navy, its men (and women), freedom, and the struggle for world peace through military preparedness and security. Anchors aweigh! [Reviewed by Allan Shields]

## GROUCHO MARX

[on seeing his former wife in a restaurant] Marx spots the ex.



# HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Koloman Moser, *Turn-of-the-Century Viennese Patterns and Designs* (Mineola NY: Dover Publications, 1998). ISBN 0-486-40269-X. Overshadowed by his colleagues Josef Hoffmann and Gustav Klimt, Koloman Moser (1868-1918) is an unjustly neglected participant in the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts, which he attended and later directed, the Vienna Secession, and the Wiener Werkstatte (or Vienna Workshop). Both prolific and versatile (he produced paintings, glassware, ceramics, jewelry, metalwork, leatherwork, furniture, textiles, carpets, clothing, posters, and lettering, including his wedding invitation, reproduced above), he was also a founding contributor to *Ver Sacrum* (Sacred Spring), the famous Secessionstil magazine. This large format, 64-page paperbound album is an unabridged republication of *Flaschen-schmuck* (Flat Ornament), a portfolio of 60 full-page allover pattern designs (half in color, half in black and white) for textiles, wallpaper, rugs, and wall hangings, that was published originally in 1901-02. This instructive, historic collection, like so many of Dover's art-related books, belongs to its Pictorial Archives series, which means that portions of the book can be reproduced by authors, artists and designers without payment or permission. For a free catalog of the Dover Pictorial Archive, write to: Dover Publications, 31 East 2nd Street, Mineola NY 11501.

What is more intriguing than a spot on the bathroom floor which, as you sit emptying your bowels, assumes a hundred different forms, figures, shapes? Often I found myself on my knees studying a stain on the floor—studying it to detect all that was hidden at first sight.

HENRY MILLER

*To Paint Is To Love Again* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1968), p. 7.

MARY OTT  
Cigarettes are killers that travel in packs.

J. BRYAN

Dorothy Parker called her canary Onan because he spilled his seed on the ground.



R.W. Wood [the American physicist] is said to have spent some time in a flat in Paris where he discovered that the lady in the flat below kept a tortoise in a window pen. Wood fashioned a collecting device from a broom-handle, and bought a supply of tortoises of dispersed sizes. While the lady was out shopping, Wood replaced her tortoise by one slightly larger. He repeated this operation each day until the growth of the tortoise became so obvious to its owner that she consulted Wood who, having first played a subsidiary joke by sending her to consult a Professor at the Sorbonne whom he considered to be devoid of humor, advised her to write the press. When the tortoise had grown to such a size that several pressmen were taking a daily interest, Wood then reversed the process, and in a week or so the tortoise mysteriously contracted to its original dimensions.

R.V. JONES "The Theory of Practical Joking—Its Relevance to Physics" in the *Bulletin of the Institute of Physics* (June 1957), p. 193.

G R E G O R Y  
N U N N  
When you go  
to drown your-  
self always  
take off your  
clothes, they  
may fit your  
wife's next  
husband.

Shirley Oneple,  
Shirley Twople,  
Shirley Threeples,  
Shirley Fourple,  
Shirley Fiveple,  
Shirley Sixple,  
Shirley Sevenple,  
Shirley Eightple,  
Shirley Nineple,  
Shirley Tenple.

ANON Children's game verse, recorded  
in Edinburgh UK, circa 1940.

S H I R L E Y T E M P L E  
I stopped believing in Santa Claus  
when I was six. Mother took me  
to see him in a department store  
and he asked me for my auto-  
graph.

While directing a play, Sir John Gielgud instructed the cast that all male actors must wear athletic supporters under their leotards, in response to which was asked: "Sir John, does that apply to those who have only the bit parts?"

KENNETH EDWARDS *More Things I Wish I'd Said, and Some I Wish I Hadn't* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1978), adapted.



LEFT  
Page from the  
Kelmscott Press edi-  
tion of *The Works of*  
*Geoffrey Chaucer*,  
published by  
WILLIAM  
MORRIS in  
1896.

# HIGHLY RECOMMENDED *Topsy*: William Morris.

Produced by Boxwood Productions. VHS color video. 57 minutes.

Available from Films for the Humanities and Sciences at 800-257-

5126 or <[www.films.com](http://www.films.com)>. William Morris was one of the most

far-reaching figures in design history—by his work as well as his

waistline. He was, as Max Beerbohm once quipped, “a wonderful

all-round man, but the act of walking round him always tired me.”

It was his ample girth and his mop of unkempt curly hair that

earned him the moniker “Topsy,” which was based on the name of

the orphan slave girl in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, who, when asked where

she thought she had come from, replied, “I ‘spect I grow’d.”

Written and narrated (with delightful hand gestures) by British art

historian Douglas Skeggs, this film biography of the father of the

Arts and Crafts Movement is simply superb, or, as Morris might

say, it’s a “stunner.” In a voice that engages as well as informs, it

uses vintage photographs, drawings, literary excerpts, interviews

with scholars, and, of particular value, filmed sojourns to the actual

sites that were central to his life, among them Oxford University,

Red House, Kelmscott Manor, and the Victoria and Albert

Museum. Within those contexts, the astonishing breadth of his

work is discussed in such design-related categories as embroidery,

furniture, stained glass, wallpapers, murals, wood engravings, illumi-

nation, calligraphy, textiles, typography, and printed books; as well

as more than 90 books of prose and poetry; and his work as a

social reformer. Nothing is omitted, not even his uncontrollable

amnesiac rages, and the affairs of his strange and unfortunate wife,

who, as he painfully knew, was the lover of his old friend and busi-

ness partner, the Pre-Raphaelite painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

OGDEN NASH

The Bronx?

No thonx.

My mother did the first terrible thing for which I never forgave her, y'know...my mother...She says to me, "Henry, I have a wart." I'm sitting in this little chair and she says, "Henry, what shall I do with this?" And I say, "Cut it off. With a scissors." Two days later she got blood poisoning and she says, "And you told me to cut it off!" and bang bang bang she slaps me, for telling her to do this. How do you like a mother who'd do that?

HENRY MILLER quoted in Robert Snyder, *This is Henry, Henry Miller from Brooklyn* (Los Angeles: Nash Publishing, 1974).



JOEY  
BISHOP  
My doctor is  
wonderful.

One time, back  
in 1955, when I  
couldn't afford  
an operation,  
he offered to  
touch up the  
x-rays instead.

ABOVE Detail from a poster by  
Austrian expressionist OSKAR  
KOKOSCHKA (1908).

This summer I saw Picasso, after a  
bullfight at Arles, accosted with  
the gifts of live infants. With a  
stroke of charcoal he designs on  
a baby's naked ass, and returns  
this art to the parents. What will  
they do, skin the child? Refuse it  
a bath for decades?

NED ROREM *The Paris Diary of Ned  
Rorem* (New York: George Braziller, 1969),  
p. 114.

Art begins with craft, and there is no art until craft  
has been mastered. You can't create unless you're  
willing to subordinate the creative impulse to the  
construction of a form. But the learning of a craft  
takes time, and we all think we're entitled to short  
cuts...

Art is rare and sacred and hard work, and  
there ought to be a wall of fire around it.

ANTHONY BURGESS *But Do Blondes Prefer Gentlemen?:  
Homage to Qwertyuio and Other Writings* (New York: McGraw-Hill,  
1986).

SIGMUND FREUD  
The mind is an iceberg, it floats  
with only 17 percent of its bulk  
above water.

On one occasion [during childhood] after we had been talking about cannibalism I heard my people say to each other: "When is that Eton boy coming?" and I thought they meant a boy who had been eaten. When he turned up, and was a perfectly ordinary boy, it caused me the most profound disenchantment. But that was not the worst. The worst instance was when I heard them say to each other, "When is that Lyon coming?" And I said, "Is there a lion coming?" "Oh yes," they said, "and you'll see him in the drawing room and it'll be quite safe." And then they came and said, "The young Lyon has come," and they ushered me into the drawing room and it was a completely conventional young man whose name was Lyon. I burst into tears and wept the whole of the rest of the day, and the poor young man couldn't imagine why.

BERTRAND RUSSELL in Barry Feinberg, ed., *The Collected Stories of Bertrand Russell* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), p. 268.

#### WOODROW WYATT

A man falls in love through his eyes, a woman through her ears.

[The mathematician John] von Neumann lived in this elegant house in Princeton. As I parked my car and walked in [in connection with a job interview], there was this very large Great Dane dog bouncing around on the front lawn. I knocked on the door and von Neumann, who was a small, quiet, modest kind of a man came to the door and bowed to me and said, "Bigelow, won't you come in," and so forth, and this dog brushed between our legs and went into the living room. He proceeded to lie down on the rug in front of everybody, and we had the entire interview—whether I would come, what I knew, what the job was going to be like—and this lasted maybe forty minutes, with the dog wandering all around the house. Towards the end of it, von Neumann asked me if I always traveled with the dog. But of course it wasn't my dog, and it wasn't his either, but von Neumann—being a diplomatic, middle-European type person—he kindly avoided mentioning it until the end.

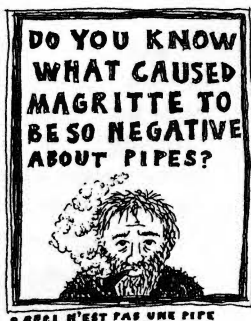
JULIAN BIGELOW quoted in Ed Regis, *Who Got Einstein's Office?* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1987), p. 110.

**RIGHT**  
 Drawing by  
 British artist LES  
 COLEMAN  
 from the new  
 edition of his book,  
*Meet the Art Students*  
 (2000).

**LADY  
 HOLLAND**  
 [Marriage is] a  
 pair of shears,  
 so joined that  
 they cannot be  
 separated;  
 often moving  
 in opposite  
 directions, yet  
 always punish-  
 ing anyone  
 who comes  
 between them.

**A N O N**  
 Cogito ergo  
 spud—I think  
 therefore I  
 yam.

## LATERAL THINKER



**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**  
*Ruskin's Journey: Teaching People to See.*  
 Produced for Lancaster University  
 Television, UK. VHS color video. 48 min-  
 utes. Available from Films for the  
 Humanities and Sciences at 800-257-5126  
 or <[www.films.com](http://www.films.com)>. No one reads art  
 criticism today, not even artists, but the  
 19th century British art critic John Ruskin  
 was one of the most famous, widely-read  
 authors of his time. His writing is admired  
 for its clarity and resonance, but also  
 because he was interested in not just art,  
 but the larger, more important issue of  
 "the art of seeing." "Hundreds of people  
 can talk for one who can think," he wrote,  
 "but thousands can think for one who can  
 see." In this rich, fascinating film biography,  
 expertly written and narrated by Michael  
 Wheeler, we are offered a breathtaking  
 virtual tour of the natural and architectural  
 landmarks (the Swiss Alps, the Gothic  
 cathedral at Rouen, Venetian architecture,  
 and Brantwood, his secluded home) that  
 shaped his core beliefs on art, life and  
 industrialization. The film argues convinc-  
 ingly that the Digital Revolution is compa-  
 rable in scale to the Industrial Revolution,  
 and that Ruskin anticipated a surprising  
 number of today's social problems when he  
 warned of the long-term collateral harm of  
 mass production.

**SAMUEL GOLDWYN**  
 Let's have some new clichés.

The rabbi's wife told me that all her uncles and aunts are deaf; they may scream as loud as they like in their Uncle Jacob's ear to no purpose, but, by addressing his nose, he becomes quite accessible; an aunt's mode of approach is her teeth.

CAROLINE FOX (diary entry dated 29 March 1843) in Simon Brett, ed., *The Faber Book of Diaries* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), p. 114.

"B-but, Mr Jimson, I w-want to be an artist."

"Of course you do," I said, "everybody does once. But they get over it, thank God, like the measles and the chickenpox. Go home and go to bed and take some hot lemonade and put on three blankets and sweat it out."

"But Mr J-Jimson, there must be artists."

"Yes, and lunatics and lepers, but why go and live in an asylum before you're sent for? If you find life a bit dull at home," I said, "and want to amuse yourself, put a stick of dynamite in the kitchen fire, or shoot a policeman. Volunteer for a test pilot, or dive off Tower Bridge with five bob's worth of roman candles in each pocket. You'd get twice the fun at about one-tenth the risk."

JOYCE CARY *The Horse's Mouth* (New York, Harper and Row, 1965).

I had a dime and a nickel in my pocket. With the dime, the tenth part of a dollar, I bought a ticket. I went in and heard the ventriloquist and his dummy: "Will you spell a word for me, Danny?" "I'll try, what's the word?" "Constantinople." "Why do you tell me you can't stand on an apple?"

CARL SANDBURG (recalling a day at the circus), *Always the Young Strangers* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1953), p. 191.

RICHARD  
BRINSLEY  
SHERIDAN  
Won't you  
come into the  
garden? I'd  
like my roses  
to see you.

JAMES THURBER  
[cartoon caption] You wait here  
and I'll bring the etchings down.



## ALSO RECOMMENDED

M U H A M -  
M A D A L I

[when asked if  
he abstained  
from sex while  
training for a  
boxing match]  
Only the nose  
knows / Where  
the nose goes /  
When the door  
close.

A N O N

Which craft  
was persecuted  
by the Puritans  
of New  
England?

What was the  
name of the  
inventor of the  
steam engine?

The name of  
the inventor of  
the sewing  
machine is pro-  
nounced how?

Doyald Young, *Fonts & Logos: Font Analysis, Logotype Design, Typography, Type Comparison, and History* (Sherman Oaks CA: Delphi Press, 1999). ISBN 0-9673316-0-9. Seven years ago, the author of this book produced an exquisite, slightly shorter work on *Logotypes & Letterforms* in which he shared what he had gained from 40 years as a type designer and 25 as a teacher of typography at the Art Center College of Design. In this equally elegant sequel, he provides both an overview of typography and a technical guide for decisions about legibility, font design, the compatibility of type styles, and the function of type within logos. Anyone who loves letters will delight in the myriad forms that appear in the book's diagrams and exemplars.

Steven Heller, *The Swastika: Symbol Beyond Redemption* (New York: Allworth Press, 2000). ISBN 1-58115-041-5. Throughout world history, among all sorts of people—the Greeks, Celts, Chinese, and Native Americans—the swastika has been employed as an inspirational symbol, a mark that has no connection at all to the Third Reich and the horrors of the Holocaust. In the July/August issue of *PRINT*, the newstand graphic design magazine, Jewish author and *New York Times* art director Steven Heller discusses his interest since childhood in the swastika, and explains why he thinks he is right to insist, as he argues in this book, that it should never be used in this culture “as anything other than an icon of evil.”

She was a well preserved woman and reminded John of a crystallized pear; her frosted transformation glistened like encrusted sugar round the stalk, which was represented by a tubular head-ornament on the apex of the carefully tended pyramid; her greeting was sticky.

SIR COMPTON MACKENZIE *Poor Relations* (London: Martin Secker, 1919), p. 148.

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With this encore issue (most of its entries are from earlier issues), we begin our 16th year of publication. Back in 1985, we dedicated the second issue to the painter JULES KIRSCHENBAUM. Once again, we remember this extraordinary artist and teacher, who died earlier this year.

[As a child, I had a governess] splendidly named Miss de Montmorency. I had doubts about her sex, because the often-uttered formula "Miss de Montmorency" reached my ear as "Mr Montmorency."

WILLIAM  
PLOMER  
*The Autobiography of William Plomer*  
(New York: Taplinger, 1976), p. 85.

COVER  
World War I-era photograph of a dazzle camouflage pattern, designed by the artist FREDERIC WAUGH, as applied to an American troop ship, the *Leviathan* (c1918).

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